

Video Transcript: Farmer Ingenuity – Combining Plastic and Living Mulch

Title Slide

(A line drawing of a hanging lightbulb with a pull chain that pulls and lights the lightbulb.)

Slide 1

Typically, plastic mulch is laid in the spring but, in this case, plastic mulch is laid in the fall, then a winter hardy cover crop, such as rye or triticale, is broadcast over top.

(Split screen with description on left. On the right, a photo of distant tractor laying rows of plastic mulch on a bare field. The landscape is brown without leaves on the trees or other crops in neighboring fields.)

Slide 2

(No text. Photo of black plastic mulch rows with a light snow dusting between the rows and clumps of plants showing through the snow.)

Slide 3

By spring, the cover crop is established and protects the soil from wind and rain erosion, while choking out weeds.

(Text over photo. Photo shows the black plastic rows with green rye plants covering the row middles. The rye crop is less than 6 inches in height.)

Slide 4

(No text. Photo of lush green triticale taller than the rows of plastic mulch.)

Slide 5

Cantaloupes and other vining crops, such as cucumbers, are transplanted onto the plastic. Sometimes a pre-emergent herbicide is added to the row middles.

(Split screen with description on left. On the right, a photo of young cantaloupe plants down the center of the black plastic mulch row. The triticale in the row middles has grown taller.)

Slide 6

The grower allows the cover crop to reach head stage...

(Split screen with description on left. On the right, a photo of the cantaloupe plants beginning to vine more and the triticale is taller and starting to turn more yellowy-green.)

Slide 7

...and then kills it with a custom-made roller.

(Text over photo. Photos a steel implement mounted to the rear of a tractor. It features two runner bars that would straddle the plastic mulch row. On the outside of each runner bar is a basket roller/crimper which is about half the width of the row middles.)

Slide 8

(No text. Photo of larger cantaloupe plants growing on the black plastic rows. Triticale that has been rolled is dry triticale and lays on the row middles, mulching the row middles. The cantaloupe vines are beginning to trail over the triticale row middle mulch.)

Slide 9

The killed cover crop suppresses weeds, contributes to soil organic matter and health, and...

(Text over photo. Photo shows large, flowering cantaloupe vines trailing over the row middles. Very few weeds are visible.)

Slide 10

...makes for much cleaner melons!

(Text over photo. Close-up of two cantaloupes on a vine.)

Slide 11

Brilliant!

(Return of the line drawing of a lightbulb that lights as the text appears.)

Slide 12

For more information about this smart farming practice, contact Cornell Vegetable Program Specialist Judson Reid at 585-313-8912 or visit CVP.CCE.CORNELL.EDU

Slide 13

(Outro slide: Cornell Cooperative Extension wordmark followed by the Cornell University insignia.)

